

## Our Contributors.

### A SHORT ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS ABOUT TO GO INTO THE HOME MISSION FIELD.

BY KNOXIAN.

Young gentlemen, suffer a word of exhortation on Home Mission topics. My only qualifications for addressing you are sympathy with you in your work and a little experience in the Home Mission Field. I have been there. My experience was not long, but it was sufficiently varied to please the most fastidious. I have walked ten miles between stations. I have lain in bed, and studied the movements of the heavenly bodies through the roof of a shanty. I know all about corduroy roads, and have had liberal quantities of real estate on my boots and trousers. It was the most adhesive property I ever owned. I needed no mortgage to hold it. I have preached in the open air in the woods. The acoustic properties of nature's temple were not first-class, but the ventilation was perfect. I have stood hat in hand before a Presbytery's Home Mission Convener, and listened to my instructions with becoming docility. Conveners were high officials in those days. They magnified their office—at least some of them did. In some cases the office was greater than the man. But let that pass. Modern Conveners are good, reasonable men and treat students kindly, which is more than could be said of some of their predecessors.

Young gentlemen, I am not a candidate for the vacant chair in Knox College. I have not the faintest hope that the Church will do anything so sensible as to put me into that chair. I have no more expectation of being even a lecturer in college than I have of ever being a Doctor of Divinity. But I do think, gentlemen, I can say a few things to you that may save you a good deal of trouble and worry in your summer's work.

Allow me first to congratulate you on the fact that wherever you may be sent you will find some excellent, warm-hearted Christian people. Few ministers have done mission work for any length of time without meeting some of God's chosen ones who were far advanced in grace. They may have been poor, may have worshipped in a log schoolhouse and lived in a log shanty; but though their surroundings were humble they lived very near to their covenant God. It was a great privilege for a young student to meet these people. I think I know some ministers who owe their success largely to the influence and prayers of pious men and women they met on their mission fields in student days. They spoke encouraging words to the young man, and encouraging words weigh a ton each when one is beginning. They prayed for him, and some of us are thankful to know that their prayers have followed us ever since. If they made any remarks on the quality of the sermons, time and experience have shown us that in the main the remarks were just. Believe me, gentlemen, there is no better judge of a sermon than a ripe old saint of God. God's children know when they are fed. Secure the good will and the prayers of the men and women who live near the cross and have power with Him who sits on the throne, and you may hurl defiance at all the nibbling critics in your station. Listen very carefully to what any really good man may say about your services. I don't say you should fish for his opinion. But if it comes incidentally never despise it. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred if you have said anything helpful, the best Christian in the congregation will be the first to give you credit for it. If you find out that you have been the means of helping one of God's children, be thankful.

All the people you meet in your field, however, will not be of the character described. If these were perfect, or nearly so, they would not need you. Now allow me to say a thing or two about your treatment of certain other classes.

Beware of *cranks*. The best way to treat a crank is not to treat him at all. The Church never sent you to your field to straighten out cranks. It sent you to preach the Gospel to normal specimens of humanity. Presbyterians are far too sensible a people to expend \$40,000 a year in the vain attempt to straighten out all the cranks in our new settlements. All the cranks in the Church are not worth half that amount of money. Some of our settled pastors have been trying to straighten out cranks for forty years and have not

succeeded. You cannot expect to execute such a contract in one summer. Preach the Gospel to the average man with all the earnestness you can, and let the cranks go. If you allow yourself to get into the hands of one or two cranks when you go on your field your usefulness is gone.

Beware of *critics*. I mean critics of the nibbling, carping, fault-finding order. What God's best children say about their spiritual food is always well worth listening to. Pay no attention to the creature who nibbles simply that he may be noticed. The best way to stamp out that sort of thing is to preach well. Ten minutes' red-hot preaching will knock the breath out of all the nibbling carpers in a congregation. Pour in the hot shot and you will conquer. At all events, if you don't conquer in that way you never will in any other. Conquer or not conquer, remember, my young friend, the Church never sent you there to worry about the small remarks of these people. You were sent by sensible men to preach the Gospel to sensible men. Preach it.

Beware of *gossips*. The second or third day you are at your post some kind friend may call and offer to give you *reliable* information as to the history, character and standing of every person in your field. If there is any creature on your field you ought to be more careful in meeting than this friend that creature is a rattlesnake.

Students are often sorely worried about visiting. It is a notorious fact that some people in mission stations demand far more attention than is received by the people who raise \$40,000 to pay for their preaching. Gentlemen, let me give you a "point" here. Make your visit *religious*, and these people won't trouble you so much. Give a good lengthy exposition of some chapter you know well, and make the other exercises a good length. If this plan does not work try the old catechetical style. When the family are seated and expect a conversation on current events ask the head of the household: "What is repentance unto life?" When he has wrestled with that old question for a time, ask the good woman: "What is effectual calling?" Then ask the eldest boy: "What is justification?" and ask the eldest girl to explain the difference between justification and sanctification. Did you ever know a student who visited in that way to be worried about not visiting? Never. The families that could enjoy visiting of that kind are nearly all dead. The ministers who had the courage to visit in that way are nearly all dead too. Try this old style, gentlemen, and you will be surprised to find how reasonable your people will soon become in the matter of visiting.

One of the burning questions in many mission fields is, should the student visit the other denominations? I take it that the Church sends you to look after our own people. If, when you have looked after them, and prepared your sermons, and have done a reasonable amount of work for next session, you have time to spend in calling upon other denominations, good and well. Call.

In conclusion, gentlemen, be careful about forming bad habits of delivery in the mission field. Some excellent men have been ruined for life in that way. Be careful, also, about getting into difficulties with Conveners, mission superintendents and neighbouring ministers. These difficulties often meet a student years afterwards when he least expects them. Better suffer a little than get into snarls of that kind. Be careful in your intercourse with thin-skinned, quarrelsome people. Some people go through the world fishing for slights. Be careful when the man with a hobby comes round. The Church never sent you there to ride any man's hobby. Above all things be careful about getting into any ring or clique that may exist in your field. If you do your usefulness for this summer is gone. If two of your parishioners quarrel, both may come to you and each may describe the other the greatest villain unchanged. Listen powerfully, but say nothing. In ten days you may see those good men pleasantly chatting on the street corner, or sitting together on the snake fence smoking. If you have said anything to either about the other, both will turn on *you*. So beware of quarrels.

A BAZAAR at St. Andrew's in aid of the zenana and other missions was opened by Dr. A. K. H. Boyd, who spoke of the value of bazaars in procuring money in small communities where other means would be unsuccessful, and also in drawing together the members of a church in Christian work. The sale realized \$400.

## THAT JOINT COMMITTEE.

MR. EDITOR,—“Unitas” has carefully evaded the real point at issue, raised in my letter, viz., whether the Presbyterian Church can consistently with her standards enter into the contemplated union with the Methodist Church, and has spent his strength on a side issue, as to my supposed want of charity to the Methodist Church. What he lacks in argument he has attempted to make up by misinterpretation of the illustrations used in my letter, and by personal remarks in reference to my Presbyterianism, with the usual covert sneer at Calvinism, in the words, “if this is all that unadulterated Calvinism does for its possessor,” worthy of a Beecher or a Channing.

The comparison I made between England's *sacrifice*, with regard to her captive subjects in Abyssinia, and the *neglect and inability*, up to the present time, of the Presbyterian Church individually and collectively to attend to all her mission fields, no matter how weak, without the necessity of this new departure, he construes into an insult to “every Methodist in the land.” Even had it borne the meaning which “Unitas” attempts to put upon it, which it did not, “Unitas” ought to be charitable enough to Methodist readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN to believe that they are intelligent enough in this age of toleration and freedom of speech not to feel insulted at any criticism, no matter how severe, of their religious beliefs—especially in a paper, whose very object is to maintain and defend Presbyterian principles, and, as a necessary consequence, to criticise opposing views. To feel insulted under the circumstances is always looked upon as a mark of ignorance and superstition, and yet, after reading and recommending the seventeenth chapter of John and the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, “Unitas” still holds such uncharitable views with regard to the intelligence of his Methodist friends.

Does “Unitas” consider that the distortions and misrepresentations of Calvinism, which are occasionally served up in the *Christian Guardian*, are “insulting” to Presbyterians? I should think they would be strange Presbyterians who would be insulted by them. Presbyterians are too intelligent for that. Notwithstanding the unguarded remarks of “Unitas,” let us be equally liberal with our Methodist friends.

And here “at once let me say that I hope our Methodist brethren will not conclude that such acerbity as ‘Unitas’ shows is a specimen of what is found in Presbyterians generally in Canada.”

If criticism meant insults our boasted Protestant right of private judgment would be a myth and the Inquisition would be justified. Mr. Editor, it is a serious thing to mistake feeling for logic; but what else can you expect of a man—“not an Arminian”—who speaks so favourably in the closing paragraph of his letter of that most inconsistent and most illogical of all Arminianisms—Methodist Arminianism.

As to the other illustration used in my letter, any ordinary reader, who does not allow his feelings to run away with his judgment, can see that the “great Moloch” of Arminianism is the *whole* system of Arminianism—not Methodist Arminianism as such. And if it be want of charity to say that Methodist Arminianism belongs to and is a part of the great system of Arminianism, which includes the Church of Rome, then not only must I plead guilty to the charge, but the theological professors in our colleges as well—Hodge, Hill and all the rest of the great divines—must go down on their knees to “Unitas,” and beg his pardon for having dared to be so uncharitable as to teach that such is the case. As the part is contained in the whole, to hand over a few Presbyterians to the part is to hand them over to the whole as a system, just as to add by conversions from without to the strength of a congregation is to that extent adding to the strength of the whole Church of which that congregation is a part, but I must be very careful how I use illustrations henceforth.

I turn to John xvii. 20, 21, quoted by “Unitas” in proof of his position: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me;” and find that it condemns the union which “Unitas” advocates. The union here prayed for, “as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee,” is to be like the union of the Father and Son—a union which excludes error—a union or agreement *in the*